

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council  
Smyrna Rest Stop  
5500 DuPont Highway  
Smyrna, DE 19977  
March 11, 2019  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Darryl Garner, Chair; Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair; Blake Roberts, Member; William McCafferty, Member; Kevin McAllister, Member; Dale Matusevich, Member; Patricia Burrell, Member

**Teleconference:** Jaqueline Poquette, Member

**Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI):** Elisha Jenkins, Director; Deb Bradl, Sr. Social Services Administrator; Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations; Lisa Edmondson, Administrative Specialist I

**Public:** Wayne Marsh, Mary Marsh, Gary Pizzolo

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Old Business:**

- William McCafferty moved to accept the January 14, 2019 minutes. Suzanne Howell seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Retreat: VRAC members discussed the Retreat. A tentative agenda was forwarded to Elisha Jenkins, Director DVI. The agenda was not submitted to the federal partners due to the fact that this is the same agenda that was rejected last year. Responses from federal partners from last year's agenda (December 12, 2017) will be forwarded to the Chair. Council requests that the agenda be submitted for prior approval. If agenda is rejected the Council would like to have a conference call with federal partners to obtain feedback and suggested changes to the agenda. William McCafferty suggested that the Council vote to have Elisha Jenkins and Darryl Garner coordinate on the agenda so the Council can take a position. The motion was seconded by Suzanne Howell. Council agreed that Darryl Garner, Chair and Elisha Jenkins, Director DVI will work on the agenda and needed revisions as well as a conference call with DVI and federal partners.
- Action items from the previous meeting:
  - New contact information for federal partners was forwarded to Suzanne Howell and she will disseminate the information to the Council.
  - Council had requested information from VR in chart form that includes the length of time consumers have been in the VR Program. Deb Bradl, Sr. Social Services Administrator for DVI will provide a chart to the Council. The Council would like to have this information by April 2019. The Council will use this information to develop strategies for individuals who have been in the VR program long term.
  - Council requested that the District Administrator's report be submitted prior to the VRAC meetings.

- Elisha Jenkins, Director DVI forwarded a copy of the 2018 draft of the Annual Report to Chair in February to be disseminated to the Council.
- Message from the Chair was read aloud. It was decided that Kevin McAllister, Member and Suzanne Howell, Vice Chair will coordinate to revise the document if needed.
- Jill Morrison, Constituent Relations, will send list of vacancies to Chair.
- Council was asked for suggestions on replacement activity for Tech Fair which will not be held this year. DVI contact will be Debbie Talley-Beane, Director of Communications.
- **Committees:** The Council wishes to create committees to address various issues and events. Kevin McAllister and Suzanne Howell volunteered for the White Cane Safety Day committee. William McCafferty volunteered to be the contact person for Dover Days to be held May 4, 2019.

#### **Director's Report:**

- **Joint Finance Committee:** The Division for the Visually Impaired's Joint Finance Committee hearing occurred on February 19, 2019. The Division's request was for \$365,000.00 for Education Services. The Division offered brief comments regarding the closing of a BEP location in response to a question from a legislator.
- **Joint Sunset and Legislative Oversight Committee:** There are no updates at this time.
- **Outreach:** The Division completed the next video focused on the Vocational Rehabilitation program. The next phase is the Business Enterprise Program. Marketing materials will be helpful to ensure accurate information regarding the program is disseminated.
- **Consumer Satisfaction Survey:** The Division for the Visually Impaired is pleased that all programs have consumer satisfaction survey modules. The Education module was added in January, 2019. DVI continues to receive feedback regarding the CSS and making positive adjustments.
- **Orientation and Mobility:** The Delaware Transportation Company (DTC) recently appointed the Division for the Visually Impaired to the Technical Advisory Committee aligned with the "Mobility in Motion" initiative. The Mobility in Motion Technical Advisory Committee is charged with reviewing information gathered to update Delaware's Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan will serve as a strategic framework for addressing the state's existing and future mobility needs as well as parallel the new federal framework focused on the need to enhance mobility for all transportation-disadvantaged populations (e.g. older adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, low income individuals, non-drivers and no-car households) by leveraging resources and partnerships to better coordinate public transit and human services transportation.

**BEP Program:** Wayne Marsh and Gary Pizzolo were on hand to answer the following questions/concerns regarding the BEP Program.

**Credit Rating:** Question: Why do the BEP applicants need to have a good credit rating? Response: Credit with suppliers is needed to operate a cash business. This requires a good credit rating. The credit rating is also important to learn how the applicants have handled their finances. There have been operators in the past who have not handled their finances correctly and this has hurt the BEP Program. Persons with poor credit scores can try getting a credit card and making timely payments to enhance their credit score.

Question: Is there some type of assistance for credit building to help them to build their credit?

Response: That is something they can work through with their counselor and Stand by Me.

A discussion occurred in reference to the two (2) BEP locations that were closed in 2018 and the lack of locations for blind vendors.

A discussion occurred regarding the standardized math test BEP applicants must complete.

**District Administrator's Report:**

- Current caseload is 253
- Goal is 39 employment outcomes
- Of the 253 on the caseload
  - 11 are employed
  - 40 are ready for work
  - Median income for FY 2018 was \$18.43
  - Transition age 14-21: 69 students
  - 57 are in secondary education/training programs
- Sampling of types of jobs: Admin support, auto tech, legal, maintenance support, manufacturing, retail, education, higher education and food service.
- Spring Break will be April 22, 2019 through April 26, 2019.
- A brochure was created for students and families to decide what activities they wish to be involved in.
- VR is currently recruiting students for summer employment opportunities such as New Castle County Youth Program and City of Wilmington Summer Youth Program.
- There is a statewide STEM event on March 19, 2019. 2 female students are planning to attend. DVI staff will accompany the students.
- Council requested to have a breakdown of the age range of the 11 persons who are currently employed.
- 20 students are planning to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Level up Program sponsored by Envision. June 23 through June 28, 2019. Resources will be available for parents.

VR is currently working with J. Morrow Consulting to implement the Ticket to Work Cost Reimbursement program. The agency can recover funds that were spent on consumer's employment goals who had either Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Social Supplemental Insurance (SSI) benefits.

Next VRAC meeting to be held April 8, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Edmondson

Administrative Specialist I

